

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00684 071157Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN IRISH TIMES MARCH 3, 1978

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN IRISH TIMES MARCH 3,  
1978 UNDER HEADING HOPE AND ILLUSION:

THERE WOULD BE GOOD REASON TO CONGRATULATE MR. IAN SMITH, BISHOP MUZOREWA, MR. SITHOLE AND CHIEF CHIRAU ON THE SPEED WITH WHICH THEY HAVE NEGOTIATED AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT FOR RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE IF SUBSTANTIAL HOPE COULD BE EXPRESSED FOR ITS REALITY AND PERMANENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE. UNHAPPILY, THERE IS LITTLE GROUND FOR OPTIMISM, NO MATTER HOW EUPHORIC THE OFFICIAL ATMOSPHERE MAY BE IN SALISBURY.

THE FACT THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WAS NOT A PARTY TO THE SETTLEMENT MEANS THAT IT IS FIERCELY OPPOSED TO IT AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. THROUGHOUT THE TWO MONTHS OF NEGOTIATION ITS LEADERS HAVE REGULARLY REMINDED THE WORLD THAT THEY WILL STEP UP THE GUERRILLA WAR - AND THERE IS EVERY SIGN THAT THEY ARE KEEPING THEIR WORD. THE BRITISH EVIDENTLY BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A SMALL CHANCE THAT THE EXISTENCE OF AN AGREEMENT MAY TEMPT ONE OF THE FRONT'S LEADERS, MR. NKOMO, TO BREAK WITH THE OTHER, MR. MUGABE, AND THAT THE FRONT WOULD BE  
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DESTROYED BY THE DIVISION.

IT HAS NEVER BEEN CLEAR ON WHAT THIS FORLORN EXPECTATION IS BASED - EXCEPT, PERHAPS, ON WISHFUL THINKING. THE FRONT HAS THE SUPPORT OF RHODESIA'S BLACK NEIGHBOURS AND OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY. THIS WILL MANIFEST ITSELF ALSO IN THE

UNITED NATIONS, WHICH MAY HOLD AN EMERGENCY DEBATE NEXT WEEK. BRITAIN MEANWHILE, AS THE DE JURE COLONIAL POWER, WILL HAVE TO FACE THE DILEMMA OF CHOOSING WHETHER OR NOT TO RECOGNISE THE STATE ESTABLISHED BY THE INTERNAL NEGOTIATIONS. TO DO SO WOULD INVOLVE FINAL REPUDIATION OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN, AND WOULD JUSTIFY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S CHARGE THAT WHITEHALL HAS SECRETLY ENCOURAGED THE SALISBURY TALKS FROM THE BEGINNING.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT ARE ENORMOUS AND WIDE-RANGING: THEY INCLUDE CONSTITUTIONAL DECISIONS, THE PREPARATION OF A GENERAL ELECTION, UN SANCTIONS AND, OF COURSE, THE CONDUCT OF THE GUERRILLA WAR. WHAT KIND OF ZIMBABWE WILL EMERGE ON THE FIRST DAY OF 1979? THERE CAN BE NO PLAYING DOWN THE FEAR THAT THE NEW COUNTRY WILL BE BORN IN THE MIDST OF A CIVIL WAR, BLACK AGAINST BLACK, UNLESS AN INITIATIVE IS FORTHCOMING WHICH CAN PERSUADE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO LAY DOWN ITS ARMS AND TO TAKE UP ITS SHARE OF POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY. KRENE

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